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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001530

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STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [ASSK](#)

SUBJECT: NLD SAYS GOB HAS EXTENDED ASSK HOUSE ARREST

REF: A. RANGOON 1508 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. VIENTIANE 1312

[1](#)C. RANGOON 724

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Though there has been no official GOB announcement, on December 1st the NLD issued a statement indicating the SPDC would continue to hold Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) under house arrest for another year. We suspect ASSK has requested her subordinates issue this statement to publicize a GOB action that the regime would prefer to keep quiet. In any event, current press guidance -- noting that the SPDC has never specified a date for ASSK's release and expressing deep disappointment that the SPDC has ignored international calls for her (and others) release -- is the appropriate posture given current information. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The National League for Democracy (NLD) Central Executive Committee (CEC) issued a statement late on December 1 that announced, effective November 27, 2004, "(SPDC) authorities will hold Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD General Secretary, under house arrest for an additional year under

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Section 10(b) of the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Subversive Elements."

[1](#)3. (C) We spoke on December 2 with NLD Secretary U Lwin who said, contrary to the public statement, the NLD CEC was being "cautious" about what the GOB may have recently communicated to ASSK regarding her house arrest status. According to U Lwin, he received a verbal message delivered on Monday November 29 by a member of ASSK's personal bodyguard, whom authorities allowed to visit NLD headquarters and return to the University Avenue compound. The messenger relayed that an unidentified police officer from the Ministry of Home Affairs had visited ASSK on November 27 and read her an official order, citing the above Section 10(b), that informed her about an additional year of detention. U Lwin said the NLD has no idea which SPDC member or GOB official signed the order.

[1](#)4. (S) U Lwin noted that since prior to November 27 the CEC has received no written communication from ASSK, a departure from recent practice (ref A). As a result, he re-emphasized, "we are being very cautious about reports of what may be happening (at the compound)." He also confirmed a report that ASSK's personal physician was questioned and searched at the compound on November 28, by GOB security personnel, during a routine medical visit. Authorities told the physician that he would henceforth be limited to thrice weekly, instead of daily, visits unless a medical emergency required an exception.

[1](#)5. (C) U Lwin said he believed that the SPDC had extended ASSK's house arrest for two reasons. First, the regime will reconvene the National Convention in February 2005 and is afraid ASSK would "disrupt that process if freed" Second, the SPDC places a high priority on "unfinished business" with Burma's cease-fire insurgent groups and does not want to be further distracted by the democratic opposition. He noted that he had heard from separate sources that "Auntie (ASSK) was furious" when the police official (whom U Lwin described as "inexperienced" in dealing with the democracy leader) read her the order on November 27, adding that in the past she had also become very angry with SPDC envoys, demanding to know why, and under what provisions of the law, she was being detained.

[1](#)6. (C) Note: In June, ASSK told UN Envoy Razali that she believed she was being held under Section 10(a) of the "Law to Safeguard" (ref C), which allows authorities to detain individuals for up to five years without trial. Section 10(b) allows for detention up to one year, but the period can be extended up to an additional year by the Minister of Home Affairs or up to five years by the Chairman of the SPDC. However, the GOB has consistently denied that ASSK is under house arrest (generally describing her situation as "in protective custody for her own well-being"). Contrary to international reports and speculation (ref B), the SPDC has not made a public announcement or otherwise addressed the alleged extension on November 27 of her house arrest. End Note.

17. (C) Comment: On the issue of ASSK's house arrest status, the SPDC has said nothing, while the NLD has issued a statement "announcing" the regime's action. We suspect that ASSK may have requested that the NLD CEC draw attention to the apparent extension, however uncertain that request may have been communicated. However, the NLD, cognizant of consistent, and recent, statements from the United States calling for the release of ASSK, U Tin Oo, and other political detainees, is not asking that we specifically address the Section 10(b) extension. November 29 EAP press guidance -- noting that the SPDC has never specified a date for ASSK's release and expressing deep disappointment that the SPDC has ignored international calls for her (and others) release -- is the appropriate posture given current information. End Comment.  
MARTINEZ